

Suggested Edits for the Harvard Square Conservation District
and Overlay District Goals Statement

Plain edits are verbatim; bracketed edits [xxx] are an interpretation of suggested edits.

III. Statement of Goals and Standards and Guidelines for Review

The goal of the District as a whole and of this order is to guide change and encourage diversity in order to protect the distinctive characteristics of the District's buildings and public spaces, and to enhance the livability and vitality of the District for ~~its residents and all Cambridge residents, students, visitors, and business~~ all people. The Historical Commission should seek to preserve and enhance the unique functional environment and visual form of the District; preserve its architecturally and historically significant structures and their settings, and encourage design compatible therewith; mitigate any adverse impact of new development on adjacent properties and areas; and discourage homogeneity by maintaining the present diversity of development and open space patterns and building scales and ages. The District must remain a pedestrian-friendly, accessible, human-scale, mixed-use environment that complements nearby neighborhoods and maintains the history and traditions of its location.

The following secondary goals for the District are intended to provide general guidance to the Historical Commission in a wide variety of situations, and are not intended to be applied to every project that will come before it. They are statements of policy, not prescriptive measures that must be applied equally in each situation.

1. Preserve historically or architecturally significant buildings and structures as well as those that contribute to the distinctive visual character or historical significance of the District.
2. Sustain the vitality of the commercial environment by preserving architecturally-significant or original building fabric where it currently exists. In architecturally-significant or important original buildings the replacement of core original building fabric features may also be undertaken. Consistent with these goals, a plan will be undertaken for the district designating those buildings that individually or in consort with others are considered architecturally significant.

When this is not possible, support creative, contemporary design for storefront alterations and additions. When preserving or restoring architecturally-significant or original building fabric is not possible or recommended, creative, contemporary design for storefront alterations and additions is encouraged.

[OR]

Only after concerted attempts at preservation and conservative context, ~~When this is not possible,~~ support creative, contemporary design for storefront alterations

and additions.

3. Support creative, contemporary design for new construction that complements and contributes to its immediate neighbors and the character of the District. Recognize and respect creativity of design during the review process and mitigate the functional impacts of development on adjacent areas.
4. Build on and sustain the diversity of existing building form, scale and material. Preserve and encourage ~~flowers,~~ green yards and courtyards and small, free-standing and wood-frame buildings where that character prevails. Encourage ~~streetwall-zero-setback~~ buildings where that character has been set. Encourage ground-level, small-scale storefronts to preserve the vitality and character of the streets. [Allow accessible lower-level stores with access to natural light.]
5. Expand the high quality public environment established in the heart of the District with attractive and compatible materials, lighting, signage, and street furniture [(such as bollards, benches, moveable seating, and the like)]. [Provide adequate facilities for discarded trash and ensure that surfaces can be cleaned and maintained.] [Accommodate street trees where possible.]
6. Expand the network of pedestrian walkways and paths wherever they can conveniently provide alternate routes through the District. Increase public access to alleys and interior spaces where appropriate, and upgrade paving and landscaping of such pathways and spaces. Enhance accessibility and safety for pedestrians throughout the District.
7. Encourage compatible design that supports new residential projects in the District, especially in mixed-use buildings, and support existing residential uses.
8. Encourage ~~projects~~ compatible design that will maintain a wide diversity of uses serving the needs of surrounding neighborhoods, students, workers and visitors from around the world.
9. Encourage creative solutions to the District's parking and transportation issues, including the problem of on-street deliveries [and passenger drop-off sites]. Discourage loading docks, which do not generally contribute to the historic character of the street.
10. [Create and maintain a bicycle-friendly environment.]
11. [Encourage environmentally sustainable development.]

The foregoing goals also recite the standards for preservation and change within the District. In addition to the factors specified in Section 2.78.220, and subject to any specific provisions of this Order, in exercising its authority with respect to the District and in considering applications for certificates of appropriateness, hardship, or nonapplicability, the Historical Commission shall be guided by the preceding general goal for the District as a whole and by such of the preceding

secondary goals as it determines to be applicable to the project or situation before it. The Historical Commission shall also be guided by the standards and guidelines described in the “Final Report of the Harvard Square Neighborhood Conservation District Study Committee,” dated November 29, 2000, which after public hearing the Historical Commission may adopt as regulations and thereafter amend from time to time. In particular, the Historical Commission and project proponents should be guided by the goals and recommendations specific to each of the six subdistricts that make up the Harvard Square Conservation District. The subdistrict goals and recommendations^[HG1]—included in Chapter VII of the November 29, 2000 report—describe the physical and historical development of each area over time, identify some of the more notable buildings and spaces, and set forth some of the preservation priorities and recommendations for each sub-area.

As permitted by Chapter 2.78.190.B, the Historical Commission may determine from time to time after public hearing that certain categories of exterior architectural features, structures, or signs may be altered without review by the Commission; provided, however, that every such alteration shall be determined by the Executive Director of the Historical Commission to conform to the regulations adopted by the Commission for the administration of the District.

Cambridge Historical Commission
February 14, 2018